Captain Smyth, director of S. A., in replying for the Astronomical Society, pointed to Mr. Britton as the founder and first secretary of the Geographical Society. Mr. W. Tooke, F.R.S., replied for the Royal Society; Mr. James Walker for the Institution of Civil Engineers; Mr. W. Cubitt, M.P., for the Building Interests, and Mr. Cunard in connection with Steam Navigation. Mr. Burgess, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Ex-Sheriff Hill, Dr. Ure, Mr. Wansey, F.S.A., and others were also present.

THE WOODEN ROOFS OF OLD ENGLAND.

AT a recent meeting of the Hereford Archæological Society, after other communications (reported at length in the local papers), Mr. Beloe read some remarks on wooden roofs.

Mr. Beloe observed that the timber roofs of the ancient regal and baronial halls merited in an eminent degree the attention of all to whom the science of construction is an object of interest, although he was unable to enter into it, then, at the length which its importance demanded. He could then only furnish a few observations, which might prove not uninteresting. He remarked that the artificers of the early Saxons appeared to have been, for the most part, either monks or slaves. They were in fact nothing more than mere necessity made them; and they lived and died poor, unhonoured, and unimproved. Mr. Sharon Turner, the historian, had remarked that "the habits of life were too uniform, its luxuries too few, its property too small, its wants too numerous, and the spirit of the great mass too servile and dull, to have that collection of ingenious, respected, and inventive men, who make and circulate our internal and external commerce, with eager but not illiberal competition, or to have those accomplished artificers and manufacturers, whose taste in execution equals the most elegant fancy of its invention." Mr. Beloe went on to remark that the Anglo-Saxon carpenter was considered as part of what we are accustomed to call the *plant* of an estate, transferable with the land. He was called the *Treow-cyrta* (tree or wood workman), and the Anglo-Saxon verb used in speaking of building is *getymbrian* (to make of wood). It was well known that churches were at times constructed of wood, one of them —Greensted, Essex—still remaining.

The Norman period was touched upon by the lecturer, who observed that it was marked by the introduction of more durable materials, which were used for several centuries before the construction of any wooden roof. This art the Norman architects practised with such admirable skill and effect, that their works have not unfrequently been considered beyond the pale of *modern* imitation. After alluding to various instances of this style, the lecturer passed to the Semi-Norman (1154 to 1189), which he remarked possessed all the characteristics of the Norman, combined with the pointed arch. Castle Acre Priory was selected as an example. The Early English or Lancet (1189 to 1272) was next explained, the illustration being a door-way at Paul's Cray, Kent, and the lecturer referred to the beautiful windows of this style in our cathedral, as well as at York, Salisbury, &c.

The lecturer then proceeded to explain the form and idea of the open-timbered roof, remarking that the upright strut or queen-post, which rises from the extremity of the hammer-beam, in most of these roofs, suggested the idea of a pillar being cut away at that point. The whole roof, therefore, reminded one of two rows of pillars, dividing the area into three aisles. He observed that the palace of the Bishop of Hereford, and Westminster Hall, as originally built by William Rufus, were built on this plan, which indeed seemed to be the usual mode of constructing halls of large dimensions previous to the fourteenth century, when an improved manner of constructing arched roofs of timber superseded the necessity of columns.

The Decorated period, including the greater part of the fourteenth century, was next referred to. After explaining the architectural characteristics of the style, the lecturer remarked at length upon the timber roofs of Nursted Court, Kent; Balsall Temple, Worcestershire; Coventry School; Croydon Palace, &c. The roof of Crosby Hall, and other buildings, though erected in that period, was perfectly distinct in principle from those yet considered, being based on the property of the triangle to resist racking or change of form.

He then passed on to consider the Perpendicular style (1377 to 1485), illustrating the architecture from a sketch of a doorway in St. Mary's, Beverley, and explaining its characteristics. In considering the timber roofs of the period, he gave a detailed description of that of Westminster Hall. That edifice was rebuilt by Richard II., almost from the foundation; he said *almost*, because Mr. Pugin says that some of the lower portions of the side walls are the original works of the time of William Rufus. As it now stands, the span of the roof is nearly double the ordinary width of Gothic groined roofs, which seldom exceeded 35 feet. Numerous obstacles to the erection of a stone roof in that case must have presented themselves, and the builder was thrown upon the resources of his art. The result was a novel as well as elegant application of that great element of lightness and beauty in the arch. The former ponderous and friable material was exchanged for one equally susceptible, and greatly superior in both tenacity and tractability. The lecturer went on to refer to the roof of Romsey Abbey Church, and that of Eltham Palace. The nearest example to the latter in this locality was the roof of St. Martin's Church, in this city; but the idea was not carried out to its fullest extent of beauty, some parts being plastered over. The lecturer then referred to the Guard-room, Lambeth Palace.

At that period, he remarked, ceilings were valued ornaments of palaces. They usually contained representations of memorable actions, but our azure church ceiling with stars occurs in ancient crypts; in other cases the ceiling is in black, with painted and gilt lattice-work, and grotesque heads, &c.; and others were of wood, painted or plastered in panels. After explaining the construction of the roof of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, the lecturer went on to allude to the interesting specimen of the roof of the cloisters of Hereford Cathedral, at the same time expressing his acknowledgments to the Very Rev. the Dean, for having drawn his attention to that roof, and to the President, for a specimen of carving.

In speaking of the Tudor period, the lecturer referred at some length to Wolsey's Hall, Hampton Court, perhaps the most elaborate specimen extant of the style. As a scientific construction, it was much inferior to the roof of Westminster Hall, although it displayed much ingenuity. Reference was then made to Westminster School, the Middle Temple Hall, and other excellent specimens of the period.

The lecturer proceeded to glance briefly at the general heaviness and inelegance of the Debased style (1547 to 1640). The illustration was from St. Peter's-in-the-East Church, Oxford. An interesting roof of this period exists in the chapel on the estate of Mr. C. T. Bodenham, of Rotherwas.

He concluded by dividing Gothic roofs into four classes:—first, those of simple arched ribs; second, those which have a grand arch spanning the entire width; third, those that have the arch supported on brackets; fourth, such as are formed of two intersecting triangular frames, in which the lateral pressure is counteracted by the longitudinal stress upon the connecting beams. After that period it became very difficult to trace the principle of the style at all.

BEDFORD ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—At a committee meeting held on Monday, the 26th ult., Sir H. Dryden, Bart., in the chair, a grant of 4*l.* was made to be placed in Mr. Hartshorne's hands, for the purpose of securing plans to be made of an ancient barn, near Peterborough, called the Saxon barn, which is about to be pulled down for some railway works. A donation of 1*l.* 1*s.* was made towards the spire of St. Edmund's, in memorial of the late treasurer of the society, Mr. Percival.

THE THAMES TUNNEL.—It is said that the number of passengers who passed through the tunnel in the week ending March 31, was 43,761. Amount of money received, 182*l.*. 6*s.* 9*d.*

SCENERY AND SATIRE.

THE LYCEUM THEATRE.

IT says something for our own and other efforts to set before the public the merits of some of the scene-painters of the day, when we find the much greater attention to the scenery of our theatres which is now paid by the periodical press generally, than was the case not long ago. The Easter spectacles produced at the various houses have given opportunities to the artists, which they have not failed to take advantage of in a greater or less degree. We shall glance at them as we have heretofore done, when an opportunity occurs, to glean any point that may interest our readers, but at this moment confine ourselves to a few words on the piece at the *Lyceum*, "The Seven Champions of Christendom," written by that arch-magician, J. R. Planché, to whom the public have reason to be grateful for realising, though temporarily, many bright dreams, and pleasant myths, without taint of immorality or coarseness.

Mr. Planché has the talent of seizing on the things of the day, and while turning them to use, shews their absurdity. He must rank amongst the opponents of "sham" in architecture, for in the new piece, Mr. Charles Mathews sings (in the way that is his own):—

"O such a town, such a wonderful metropolis,
With mysteries and miracles all London teems:
Humbug has there got the snuggest of monopolies,
Every thing is any thing, but what it *seems*.
You sleep upon an iron bed, and fancy it a feather one,
You think your ceiling's carved in oak—why, bless you its a leather one;
Your marble mantle-piece turns out of slate, if you're a scrubber, Sir,
And paving stones are made of wood, or else of india rubber, Sir."

He touches very cleverly the love of Latin and Greek names,—

"Here is a Pantechnicon, and there is an Emporium,
Your shoes are 'antigropelos,' your boots of 'pannus-corium;'
'Fumi-porte chimney-pots,' 'Eureka shirts' to cover throats,
'Idrotobolic hats,' and 'patent aqua-scutem' over coats."

And then gives an immense amount of information on art, a reference to the weak state of our School of Design, and the improper manner in which the Vernon collection has been treated, all in the space of eight lines:—

"O such a town, such a picturesque metropolis,
Taste is polychromical for painting wild;
Frescoes for peers, and Art-unions for the populace,
Schools where young designers learn to draw it mild.
Dioramas, Cosmoramas, Cycloramas, charming ones,
Mississippi panoramas, four miles long—alarming ones!
A national collection, where they never ask a fee at all,
Besides the Vernon Gallery, a sight no one can see at all."

We must not forget the scenery. Mr. Beverley has quite maintained the character we have before this given him. "The Fairy Lake and Grotto of the Swans" is a beautiful piece of imaginative rock work: the "Ruins in the Valley of the Nile," is a morsel of David Roberts,' magnified which might have been made a little more of: and as to the "Camp of the Champions," the last scene, we are quite willing to adopt the lines of the epilogue—

——"Own it is a joyous decoration,
And be kind enough to say, in our usual good-natured way,
That the scenery by Mr. Beverley,
Has been painted very cleverly."

ROMAN REMAINS FOUND NEAR COLCHESTER.—On ground belonging to Mr. J. Taylor, of West Lodge, about 250 funeral vessels, and a great variety of other remains, have been found in such circumstances as lead to the supposition that there are at least twelve times as many urns in the same ground still unexhumed. Mr. R. Smith and some other members of the Archæological Association have been at Colchester inspecting these remains.

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